

Friday, 26 June, 09:30–11:00

Defining Deep Fakes

Claire Benn
Cambridge University

The phenomenon of doctoring, altering and fabricating images that look like photographs has a history as long as photography itself. This has continued into the digital age where, in December 2017, the phenomenon of 'deepfakes' made headline news. Since then, public awareness of deepfakes, as well as their prevalence, has increased. And yet, while deepfakes have evolved as technology evolves, our *understanding* of deepfakes is stuck in the past: existing definitions cling too closely to the deepfakes of 2017 and fail to take account of the menagerie of different kinds of deepfakes now possible to create. They cluster around five key features, none of which are, on closer inspection, necessary, given the interesting, complex, and non-typical cases that abound. A new definition is needed, one that makes space for the ever-expanding circle of deepfakes and one that can explain the ethical and political problems deepfakes raise. This is what I seek to provide.

Friday, 26 June, 11:15–12:45

Automating Bureaucracy

Luise Müller
Freie universität Berlin

Living in a modern democratic state means living under the power of others, which produces a paradox: we are supposed to be one another's equals, yet other people decide, judge, and rule over me. This is the problem of political authority in its relational-egalitarian interpretation. Relational egalitarians like Niko Kolodny and Daniel Viehoff claim to solve it: authority is vindicated if people have equal control over, or equal opportunity to influence, the laws that govern us. But laws must also be applied, and this happens within hierarchical bureaucratic structures. Elizabeth Anderson argues that bureaucratic principles can mitigate problematic hierarchies; Jacob Sparks and Athmeya Jayaram argue that automatization can too. I ask whether we have egalitarian reasons for automating bureaucratic procedures. The argument in favor is that automation eliminates human discretion, thereby ameliorating relations of subordination between equals. I argue this fails: it reproduces rather than eliminates relational asymmetry. Instead, I propose building equality-enhancing infrastructure that uses AI as an intermediary to amplify citizens' standing vis-à-vis agents of the state.

Friday, 26 June, 14:15–15:45

The Myth of Collective Agency

Matthew Braham
Universität Hamburg

A standard argument in social ontology infers ontological holism from the non-additive or superadditive character of collective outcomes. This paper offers a single refutation of that inference. Using the Shapley value as an existence result, we show that even maximally non-linear and superadditive collective phenomena admit additive, individual-level attributions of contribution. What is collective is the structure of interaction, not the bearer of agency. Unless it can be shown that no such attribution exists in principle, the move from superadditivity to irreducible collective agency is invalid.

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The Philosophy Workshop Series on the Elbe

Friday, 26 June, 16:00–17:30

Ought and Obligation

John Hayman
University College London

Does being obligated to do something imply that one can do it? Whereas Kant and Reid regarded this principle as an unquestionable truth, Roman law—from which it originates—explicitly admitted exceptions to it. The answer defended here rests on a distinction between “ought” and obligation. It is not so much that “obligated” has greater normative force than “ought”, but rather that they belong to distinct spheres. “Ought” expresses an intellectual concept — more precisely, it defines the goal of deliberation — whereas obligation is an ethical concept, which frames the interpersonal evaluation of conduct. This is why “ought” implies “can”, whereas obligation does not.

Saturday, 27 June, 09:30–11:00

Criminal Wrongdoing and What We Owe to Each Other

Erasmus Mayr
Freie Universität Berlin

Victim-based offenses essentially involve the violation of directed or relational duties: When they are committed, the perpetrator not merely acts wrongly, but, necessarily, wrongs the victim. It is therefore natural to expect that criminal punishment for victim-based offenses crucially responds to the wronging of the victim, and not merely to the violation of impersonal legal prohibitions. But it is notoriously difficult to do justice to this idea: For the criminal law is usually seen as concerned with merely ‘monadic’ rather than relational duties and their violations. In this talk, I am going to further develop and defend a relational view of the relevant criminal law duties, which makes room for criminal punishment to respond directly to the wronging of the victim in cases of victim-based offenses. I will argue that this view is superior to several rivals, inter alia, because it makes sense of the crucially different role of the victim’s will before and after commitment of the crime.

Saturday, 27 June, 09:30–11:00

Dementia, Binds, and Nudges

Anna Mahtani
London School of Economics

In cases of preference change – including cases of dementia—we sometimes want things for our future selves that we no longer want when that future time arrives. In such cases, we seem motivated to bind our future selves – even when that binding is costly. This picture is complicated by the role of carers, who may help the person in their decision-making and execution at every stage. In this paper I explore the ethics and practical consequences of nudging rather than binding one’s future self. Instead, I propose building equality-enhancing infrastructure that uses AI as an intermediary to amplify citizens’ standing vis-à-vis agents of the state.

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